

lieve on the Lord Jesus Christ." He confessed his faith and was straightway baptized. When the eunuch asked of Philip that the right might be administered to him, he was told "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." (Acts 8 : 37.) Having declared his faith in the Savior, his request was complied with; he was made happy in Jesus, and went on his way rejoicing. Not only was faith in the applicant required by the apostles, but also repentance. (Matt. 4 : 17 ; Acts 2 : 38 ; 3 : 19.) Now, repentance is a godly sorrow for sin, and sin is transgression against the holy law of God. Without this law, there is no transgression. (Rom. 4 : 15.) That is, where there is not ability to determine between right and wrong, as it is set forth in the law of righteousness, there can be no sin. Of course we are all held responsible for all the light we have, and we must constantly seek for more, but where there is *no* light, there is no responsibility. Sin is, therefore, a conscious and willful disobedience to God. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4 : 17.) Since the infant in eloquent innocence has no conception of wrong or right, it is not responsible. It has a title to "mansions in the skies," and will continue to have, until by sins of mission or commission it is forfeited.

Baptism was furthermore ordained as one of the steps leading to the remission of sin. If it fails in this, it is entirely valueless. But, it is argued, that "we are all born in sin." If such a declaration is true, it must yet be admitted it was not *our* sin,—we had nothing to do with it, having no choice in the matter. Yes, but how about that original sin? There was no doubt a time when the tender justice of God was unsatisfied and a long line of sinfulness was not answered for, but in the fulness of God's own time, when the pitiful eye and heart of our heavenly Father had seen and known the heavy burden resting upon man, and realized the impossibility of man ridding himself of it by satisfying justice, then he made the sacrifice; our Redeemer died and original sin was atoned for. Every man has committed more sin than he could atone for, even though he imposes upon himself the most vigorous penance. How could he then atone for those committed so long ago? No, no, that score is settled, and to-day we stand or fall, according to our own decisions. If we have committed sin, and we have, (II Chron. 6 : 36) then by our acceptance of Christ, and by our obedience to him, the record of our sin shall be obliterated, for such is his prom-

ise. But the infant has committed no sin and therefore there are none to be remitted, and it is thus not a proper subject for Christian baptism.

Knowledge of the nature and purpose of the rite, is also required in applicants for baptism, for there can be no faith without some knowledge of that which we are called upon to believe. "How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10 : 14.) Men must be made to understand their need of Christ, and their hopelessness without him, before they will desire him and come to him. Their knowledge of him may be unfinished, for no one can fully compass the greatness of his glory and power, but if knowing themselves needy they come, they shall be received. (John 6 : 37.) But the innocent babe, for whose sustenance God has made wise provision, during the period of its helplessness, is therefore already in him, and shall be until such time as by its own choice it rejects him.

The allegiance to Christ in his adopted children and brethren, must be real,—not nominal. Only let the impression become fixed, that the man is safe because in his infancy he received the rite of baptism, and that in his youth he studied a catechism, and answered from it a satisfactory number of questions, and then his spiritual horizon is without the sign of coming light. A superficial knowledge of the scriptures will not give light; we must breathe the spirit that pervades them, we must see in them the living, loving and beckoning Christ. He must be personally accepted, and his word must become a "lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path." (Psalm 119 : 105.) We reject infant baptism, because it makes churchmen and not Christians. I know this statement is sweeping, and that there are many devout men who received and administer it, but the statement nevertheless is generally true. It may indeed be a means of adding members to the church, but it is rare that it adds real strength. The true strength of any church is not so much dependent upon the number of its communicants, but upon the amount of spirituality there is within it. Thus the congregation numbering a thousand souls may or may not be strong. If its members are spiritual, true followers of the meek and lowly Lamb, then such a congregation would indeed be strong. If its acceptance of Christ and his claims be merely nominal, it is as weak as the weakest. I arraign the doctrine of infant baptism for making nominal Christians, and thus making a weak church. Spirituality is the end sought by all the ordinances of

God's house, and if they fail to help men to that result, it is because men have not followed their teachings, and have thus abused them. Baptism teaches some of the most beautiful and useful lessons which the novitiate is to learn. Let him be ready to receive them, and anxious to follow where they lead, and the rite will not be wasted upon him; it will be a soul cheering and a life giving service, through which he will know himself to have been brought nearer God.

The custom of baptizing infants seems to me to be utterly without scriptural warrant or precedent. I am well acquainted with the arguments made in favor of it, on the presumption that the household baptism spoken of (Acts 16 : 15, 33,) must have included infants. If the opening paragraphs of this paper are true, then I need say nothing here in answer to that argument. But, we are asked, did not Jesus say, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me." (Matt. 19 : 14.) Yes, indeed, the Savior used these words and many others concerning children, but he did not say, "suffer them to be brought," or "allow their parents to carry them to the font." He does say, "forbid them not to come." Now this expression certainly means an acting on the part of the children themselves,—a choosing to come. Whenever the child even though it be a "little child" feels its need of a Savior and desires to come to Jesus and accept him as such, then it is sin to stand in its way, and certain punishment will follow (Matt. 18 : 6.) But the innocent infant has no conception of such need; it makes no choice for its satisfying, and it does not come;—it is brought by the hand of its parent, not to Jesus but to man, and from him receives what is often called baptism.

But, it is argued, circumcision was a type of Christian baptism, and since this service was performed according to law upon infants, therefore baptism is to be administered to infants. There are several facts which this argument ignores. 1. Circumcision is not a type of Christian baptism, and there is no scripture which teaches it. 2. It was only performed upon males, thus ignoring one-half of the human family. While the history of baptism clearly shows that no such distinctions were made by its administrators in the early or later church.

It is further argued that infant baptism is only following apostolic advice (Eph. 6 : 4.) "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The children are already in the Lord, and we are by this scripture enjoined to lead a godly and righteous life before them, thus show-